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Cracks

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Cracks**Hunter Murphy**

I remember the pavement, and the cracks within it that created monsters in my mind's eye. My still intact imagination allowed my 7-year-old brain to create marvelous worlds within those cracks. Staring down at my feet, each step destroys the foundation of the monsters. I am the hero for the lovely ants who I feed crumbs to during recess. I can't see them since the sun's still waking up, but I know they remember me even if I'm not at school.

I see my dad's enormous shoes hurt the cracks a lot more than I can. I want big feet like him... I want to wake up early like him, go to a job, and drink bitter coffee like he does.

We walk across the busy road that you can see from his window on the 8th floor, and I see my friends again.

I didn't know their names at all, but they had the brightest smiles. Round, bulging eyes that resembled the Chuck-E-Cheese animatronics I used to be afraid of when I was smaller. Their smiles looked like the people on T.V., perfectly straight with a sparkle to match. Normally they were pearly white, but it was too early so their teeth were orange that day. The streetlights were the only illumination for them, and it reminded me of how tired I was.

Each of them was a different food item; a hotdog, a hamburger, donut, and even a cup of the bitter coffee my Dad was going to order. I wondered if he was drinking with my friend, or somebody else. We approached the shack that my friends called home, and immediately the aroma hit me; I knew what I wanted before Dad even had the chance to say

“What do you want today, buddy?”

Before I could answer, the nice worker interrupted my thoughts and said “Hey guys, you're up early!”

“It's just one of those days, Jim,” my dad said. “They keep scheduling me early this week, my shifts are all out of whack and I can barely get myself up this early. Sometimes it all just feels pointless.”

“I'm sorry Mark, but how do you think I feel?”

They both laughed tiredly, because the nice worker had to open up shop at 4 A.M. every day ever since the bank said he didn't make enough money. My dad told that to me later when I asked, but I giggled along anyway.

The yellow of the streetlights had now illuminated the room inside, and it was making my eyes feel weak. However, I persevered and was able to tell the nice worker that I wanted a Long John donut, my favorite kind.

My dad pulled out his wallet, and I remember there were only a couple of bills in there. Now, I can only assume what the amount may have been, but truth be told, he could only afford this donut and a small coffee for breakfast, and he wouldn't eat again until dinnertime.

We said goodbye to the nice worker one last time and waited and waited and waited at the bus stop. They came late, like they did each day, and then we waited some more inside the bus. This bus didn't smell bad, but sometimes you could catch a whiff of anything imaginable on the bus.

My dad and I walked to my school, and it was still dark. He let me get on his back after I practically pleaded:

“Dada, I feel like I'm going to fall asleep.”

“I know buddy, I wish neither of us had to wake up this early. But I got a surprise for you for not being a stinker this morning.”

“Really?!” I exclaimed. The energy jolted back into me as if I’d had a sip of his black bean water.

He reached into his bag as I watched in awe. Slowly but surely, he rummaged through the assortment of items that had no real use within it. Finally, he grabbed a transparently green CD case, with an indecipherable message on its face. It was exactly what I wanted, even if I didn’t know it.

“Here you go, it’s the first two episodes in the Star Wars prequels. You can watch it since you don’t start school for another three hours or so.”

I didn’t understand much of what he said, let alone the order of the Star Wars movies, but it was the perfect surprise anyway. I finally got to bring in my own movie to watch, which was a tradition for the kids such as myself who had no ride home, or whose parents worked during the insufferable hours.

I didn’t have enough time for both movies, but my Dad always knew how to make me happy. Luckily for me, things haven’t changed in that sense.

Lace Of That Day, Karen Bartlett

